

Kon Ka Kinh National Park

Alternative site name(s)

None

Province(s)

Gia Lai

Area

41,780 ha

Coordinates

14°09' - 14°30'N, 108°16' - 108°28'E

Agro-ecological zone

Central Highlands

Decreed by government

Yes

Management board established

Yes

Investment plan prepared

Yes

VCF eligibility criteria met

A, B, C

Social screening criteria met

None

Conservation needs assessment prepared

Yes - 2001

Operational management plan prepared

No

Tracking tool completed

No

Map available

Yes

Management history

Kon Ka Kinh was included on Decision No. 194/CT of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, dated 9 August 1986 (MARD 1997), which decreed the establishment of a 28,000 ha nature reserve for the conservation of "sub-tropical high mountain forest [with] gymnosperm species prevailing" (Cao Van Sung 1995). In 1999, an investment plan was prepared by BirdLife International and the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute (Le Trong Trai *et al.* 2000). In the same year, the investment plan was approved by Gia Lai Provincial People's Committee and MARD, and a nature reserve management board was established. Subsequently, Kon Ka Kinh was upgraded to national park status, following Decision No. 167/TTg of the Prime Minister, dated 25 November 2002.

The management board of Kon Ka Kinh National Park currently has 33 members of staff, based at three guard stations. The management board is under the management of Gia Lai Provincial People's Committee (Pham Ngoc Binh, Kon Ka Kinh National Park *in litt.* 2003).

Kon Ka Kinh is included on a list of Special-use Forests to be established by the year 2010, prepared by the FPD of MARD, as a 41,780 ha national park (FPD 2003); this list has not yet been approved by the government.

On 17 and 18 December 2003, the environment ministers of the ASEAN nations amended the ASEAN Declaration on Heritage Parks and included four ASEAN Heritage Parks in Vietnam, including Kon Ka Kinh National Park.

Topography and hydrology

Kon Ka Kinh National Park is located in Kon Phe, Dakrong and Krong communes, K'Bang district, Ha Dong commune, Dak Doa district, and Ayun commune, Mang Yang district, Gia Lai province. The national park is situated on the Kon Tum plateau in the central Annamite mountains. To the north of the national park, elevations gradually increase towards Mount Ngoc Linh, the highest point in the central Annamites. To the south and west, the topography is flatter, and altitudes are below 500 m. Altitudes within the national park range from 570 m in the Ba river valley, to 1,748 m at the summit of Mount Kon Ka Kinh (Le Trong Trai *et al.* 2000).

The national park straddles two catchments: streams originating in the east of the national park feed the Ba river, which flows east, into the South China Sea; whilst the west of the national park lies within the catchment of the Mekong River. Due to the steep topography, rivers and streams originating in the national park are often short, narrow and fast flowing, with many waterfalls (Le Trong Trai *et al.* 2000).

Biodiversity values

Kon Ka Kinh National Park contains 33,565 ha of natural forest, equivalent to 80% of the total area of the national park. The national park supports a range of montane habitat types. Of particular importance are 2,000 ha of mixed coniferous and broadleaf forest containing *Fokienia hodginsii* (Le Trong Trai *et al.* 2000).

Kon Ka Kinh National Park forms part of a contiguous landscape of natural habitats in north-eastern Gia Lai province, and adjacent Binh Dinh and Kon Tum provinces, which supports some of the most intact faunal and floral communities in the central Annamites. Notably, the national park supports a number of globally threatened mammal species, including Grey-shanked Douc *Pygathrix cinerea*, Yellow-cheeked Crested Gibbon *Hylobates gabriellae* and Tiger *Panthera tigris* (Le Trong Trai *et al.* 2000).

Kon Ka Kinh is situated within the Kon Tum Plateau Endemic Bird Area, and supports six restricted-range bird species (Le Trong Trai *et al.* 2000). One of these species, the globally vulnerable Chestnut-eared Laughingthrush *Garrulax konkakhensis*, which is endemic to the Kon Tum plateau, was discovered at Kon Ka Kinh in 1999 (Eames and Eames 2001). For these reasons, Kon Ka Kinh qualifies as an Important Bird Area (Tordoff 2002).

Kon Ka Kinh National Park is also a globally important site for the conservation of amphibian diversity. Kon Ka Kinh supports a number of amphibian species endemic to the Annamite mountains, including four species assessed as globally threatened during the Global Amphibian Assessment: *Leptobrachium banae*, *L. xanthospilum*, *Rana attigua* and *Rhacophorus baliogaster* (IUCN-SSC and CI-CABS 2003).

Conservation issues

Parts of Kon Ka Kinh National Park were previously managed by Dakrong, Krong Pa and Mang Yang I Forest Enterprises. An area of 8,247 ha, equivalent to 20% of the national park has been degraded by past commercial logging activities and continuing illegal timber extraction, while a further

12,286 ha, or 29% of the national park, has been cleared by commercial logging or shifting cultivation and now supports a range of secondary vegetation types (Le Trong Trai *et al.* 2000).

Although commercial logging activities in the national park have now ceased, exploitation of certain forest resources is still occurring at unsustainable levels. Potentially the most harmful activities, from a conservation perspective, are hunting and rattan collection. Timber extraction by local people is believed to occur at low levels; a more serious problem is illegal timber extraction by groups of loggers from other parts of Vietnam (Le Trong Trai *et al.* 2000).

Because of the low population density and large area of unused, fertile land, the buffer zone of Kon Ka Kinh National Park has been, and continues to be, a focus for spontaneous migration from other parts of Vietnam, particularly the northern provinces. For instance, in 1997 and 1998, a total of 413 migrants settled in Lo Ku commune, amounting to 17% of the current population of the commune. Spontaneous migration is one of the most serious conservation problems at Kon Ka Kinh, because, as the population of the buffer zone increases, so does pressure on forest resources (Le Trong Trai *et al.* 2000).

Kon Ka Kinh National Park is situated 12 km west of Kon Cha Rang Nature Reserve, to which it is linked by intervening forest areas. The two protected areas, therefore, form an area large enough to support viable populations of large mammals, such as Tiger, that neither area could support in isolation. However, the intervening forest areas are currently under the management of Tram Lap and Dakrong Forest Enterprises. In the investment plan for Kon Ka Kinh, BirdLife and FIPI strongly recommended that, in the future, these areas should be incorporated within the boundaries of the two protected areas to form one contiguous protected area (Le Trong Trai *et al.* 1999). This recommendation is also contained within the *Tropical Forestry Action Plan* (MOF 1991), the *Biodiversity Action Plan for Vietnam* (Government of SRV/GEF 1994) and a recent review of the protected areas system in Vietnam published by BirdLife International and FIPI (Wege *et al.* 1999).

Although only 301 people live within the boundaries of the national park, a total of 27,210

people inhabit the buffer zone. The inhabitants of the buffer zone consist of indigenous ethnic groups (principally Ba Na), who mainly practice shifting cultivation and exploitation of forest products; and in-migrants from lowland areas, who mainly cultivate coffee or are involved in forestry activities.

During the 1990s, high coffee prices attracted a large number of spontaneous in-migrants to the area. During this period, the biggest threats to biodiversity at Kon Ka Kinh were illegal timber extraction, mainly by outsiders; hunting, mainly by local people; and conversion of forest to coffee plantations and shifting cultivation. In recent years, the first two threats have been significantly reduced as a result of the active efforts of government agencies, while the third has been reduced as a result of a fall in the coffee price. However, a high rate of natural population growth and the potential for a recovery of the coffee price mean that forest conversion remains a major threat, which, if left unchecked, could undermine the biological integrity of Kon Ka Kinh National Park, and its connectivity with Kon Cha Rang Nature Reserve.

Other documented values

Kon Ka Kinh National Park has an important role in upstream watershed protection for several large rivers that provide water for irrigation and domestic use for a number of districts in Gia Lai and Kon Tum provinces. Additionally, the west of the national park forms part of the catchment of the Yaly hydroelectric power station (Le Trong Trai *et al.* 2000).

The national park is of importance to local people as a source of natural resources, such as firewood honey and rattans. Also, the national park supports at least 110 plant species with known medicinal uses. Use of plants in traditional medicine is widespread amongst local people, although the commercial potential of these species remains largely unrealised (Le Trong Trai *et al.* 2000).

The national park contains scenic landscapes and other natural features of interest to visitors. However, the potential tourism value of Kon Ka Kinh must be considered low at the present time, because of the inaccessibility of the area and the lack of provision for tourism in the management regulations (Le Trong Trai *et al.* 2000).

Related projects

With the assistance of BirdLife International, Gia Lai Provincial People's Committee are currently developing a medium-sized Global Environment Facility project, covering Kon Ka Kinh National Park, Kon Cha Rang Nature Reserve, and the intervening forest enterprises. It is expected that project activities will begin implementation in 2004.

The government-sponsored *Fixed Cultivation and Sedentarisation Programme*, funded by the Fund for Eliminating Famine and Reducing Poverty, is settling migrants from other areas of Vietnam in K'Bang district (Le Trong Trai *et al.* 2000).

Conservation needs assessment

A conservation needs assessment was conducted for Kon Ka Kinh in December 2001, with support from BirdLife International. Based on an assessment of the biodiversity values of the site, and the direct and indirect threats to them, six high priority activities for VCF support were identified:

- capacity building for the national park management board;
- improved coordination with other enforcement agencies;
- awareness raising;
- community co-management;
- improved targeting of forest protection contracts;
- research on sustainable harvesting levels.

Operational management plan

An operational management plan has not been prepared for the site.

Eligibility against VCF criteria

Kon Ka Kinh is eligible for VCF support because it meets criteria A, B and C.

Criterion	Eligibility
A _I	CA1 - Central Annamites
A _{II}	VN020 - Kon Ka Kinh
B _I	Decision No. 167/TTg, dated 25/11/02
B _{II}	National Park
B _{III}	Under provincial management
C _I	Management board established
C _{II}	

Social screening requirements

A social screening report has not been prepared for the site.

Criterion	Eligibility
A	
B	
C	
D	

Literature sources

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